MARVEL
#6 IN A NINE-ISSUE LIMITED SERIES
SECRET WARS II
MOVE OVER, HEROES! THE BEYONDER IS HERE!
ABSOLUTELY THE MOST COSMIC EPIC EVER! GUEST-STARRING: MEPHISTO! THE WATCHER! ETERNITY! CHAOS & ORDER! IN-BETWEENER! LIVING TRIBUNAL! CELESTIALS! AND MUCH MORE!
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Beyond time, space, and the myriad dimensions lies another universe to which our own is as a droplet of water to the ocean. The One Who Is All in that other universe has learned of our universe and has come here to walk among us, that he might come to understand the essence of humanity.

The fragile Earth trembles beneath his feet, dreading his godlike omnipotence.

Stan Lee PRESENTS: SECRET WARS™ II

LIFE RULES!

IT TOOK ONLY A FEW MINUTES FOR THE ONE FROM BEYOND TO BUY THE PROPERTY, INCLUDING SEARCHING THE TITLES AND REGISTERING THE DEEDS.
THEN HE FILED THE PLANS, ACQUIRED THE BUILDING PERMITS AND PAID THE FEES. THAT TOOK ANOTHER COUPLE OF MINUTES.
THEN, TWENTY-TWO SECONDS AGO, HE BEGAN CONSTRUCTION -- AND ALREADY HIS NEW DWELLING/HEADQUARTERS IS ALMOST FINISHED.
HE COULD HAVE DONE IT ALL INSTANTLY, SO OMNIPOTENT IS HE -- BUT HE SENSES THAT HIS NEW NEIGHBORS ARE THE TYPE WHO TAKE LIFE AT A SLOW AND EASY PACE, SO HE TAKES HIS TIME. HE INTENDS TO BE HERE FOR A LONG WHILE, AND HE WANTS TO FIT IN.
YES, SPARTA, ILLINOIS HAS A NEW RESIDENT.

JIM SHOOTER SCRIPTER * AL MILGROM PENCILER * STEVE LEIALOHA INKER * RICK PARKER LETTERS * MINNY HANDS COLORS * BOB BUDIANSKY EDITOR

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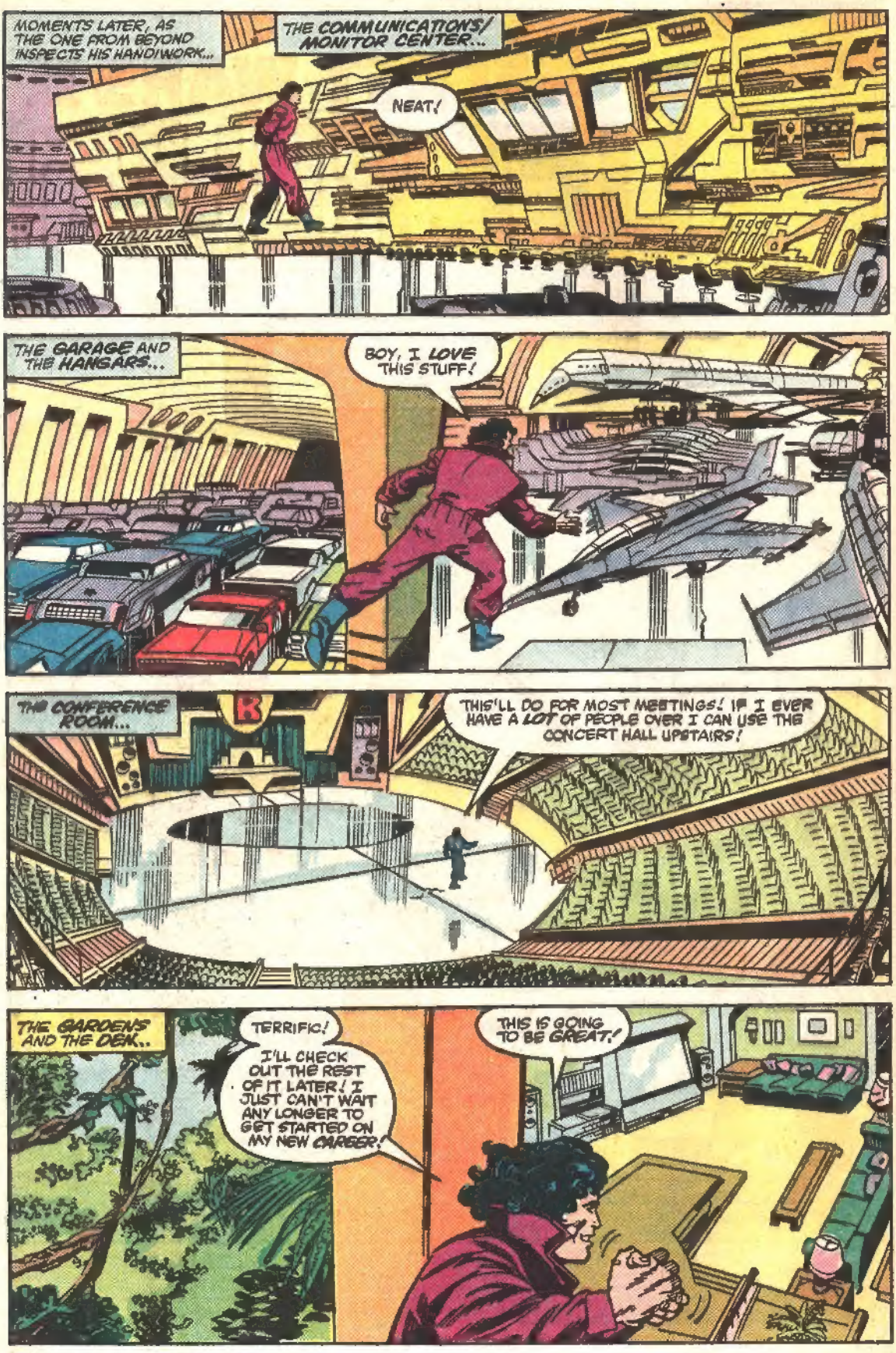

MOMENTS LATER, AS THE ONE FROM BEYOND INSPECTS HIS HANDIWORK...
THE COMMUNICATIONS/ MONITOR CENTER...
NEAT!
THE GARAGE AND THE HANGARS...
BOY, I LOVE THIS STUFF!
THE CONFERENCE ROOM...
THIS'LL DO FOR MOST MEETINGS! IF I EVER HAVE A LOT OF PEOPLE OVER I CAN USE THE CONCERT HALL UPSTAIRS!
THE GARDENS AND THE DEN...
TERRIFIC!
I'LL CHECK OUT THE REST OF IT LATER! I JUST CAN'T WAIT ANY LONGER TO GET STARTED ON MY NEW CAREER!
THIS IS GOING TO BE GREAT!

MEANWHILE, IN DOWNTOWN SPARTA, WHOSE FEW RESIDENTS HAVE YET TO NOTICE THE NEW EDITION TO THEIR SKYLINE--
--ONE FINALLY DOES...
GEE--! WHERE'D THAT COME FROM?
I SMELL A STORY! MAYBE EVEN ONE THAT'LL PUT THE OL' DAILY SUN-TELEGRAPH ON THE MAP--!
NOT TO MENTION ME!
DAVE! JUST THE MAN I'M LOOKING FOR!
UH...HI, MR. MCCORKLE! ARE THINGS OKAY AT THE DRUGSTORE?
YEP! BY THE WAY, THE NEW COMIC BOOKS ARE IN, DAVE! I'VE GOT YOUR REGULARS SET ASIDE AS USUAL!
GREAT! I'LL STOP BY LATER... MAYBE...
GOOD! NOW ABOUT MY AD--I WANT TO DO SOMETHING SPECIAL THIS WEEK TO GET THAT ASPERGUM MOVING OFF THE SHELVES! YOU'LL HAVE TO TOP THE AD YOU PUT TOGETHER FOR MY BIG DOOR-BUSTER SALE, DAVE!
UM... CAN WE TALK LATER? I'M IN KIND OF A HURRY...
WELL, I'LL BE--! RUNNING OUT ON THE SUN-TELLY'S BEST CUSTOMER!
I SWEAR, THAT BOY IS NEVER GOING TO AMOUNT TO ANYTHING!
VROOOM
AT THAT MOMENT...
HMM...IT LOOKS LIKE THE SUPER-POWERED CHILDREN WHO CALL THEMSELVES ARMOR ATTACK AND THEIR YOUNG ALIEN FRIEND MOE! ARE GETTING INTO TROUBLE OVER THEIR YOUNG HEADS!
SHOULD I HELP THEM? I WONDER...
YES.!
IT MUST BE THE RIGHT THING TO DO! THEY'RE JUST KIDS--!
THESE DECISIONS WILL PROBABLY BECOME CLEARER TO ME AS I GO ALONG!

AND...
THIS PLACE IS HUGE-- LIKE THE SEARS TOWER TIMES A HUNDRED!
HOLY GEE--! A FLYING MAN!

W-WOW!

SECONDS LATER, IN NEW YORK CITY...
THAT'S IT!
YOU'RE SURE THAT'S THE TRAIN YOU SAW FALLING IN YOUR SPECIAL DREAM, FRANK?
YOU MEAN IN HIS STUPID BABY DREAM!
KATIE, BEHAVE! YOU'RE JUST GRUMPY 'CAUSE IT'S PAST YOUR BEDTIME!

MEANTIME, BENEATH THE ELEVATED TRAIN TRACKS...
KABOOM!
HA! SO MUCH FOR THE DEATH ANGEL GANG-- AND WHOEVER ELSE WAS STUPID ENOUGH TO BE ON THAT TRAIN!
SINCE WE FOUND THIS LASER GUN,* AIN'T NOBODY GOING TO MESS WITH THE SQUIDS!
* LOST BY AN ALIEN SNARK IN POWER PACK #17 -- THOUGH THE SQUIDS DON'T KNOW THAT -- BOB.

IF YOU DEGRAVITIZE THE TRAIN, GEE, I CAN PUSH IT BACK!
UHH! MORE!
I'M TRYING, LIGHT-SPEED!
THE HOOD WITH THE SNARK GUN IS AIMING AT US!
MAKE A SMOKESCREEN, MASS MASTER! QUICK!

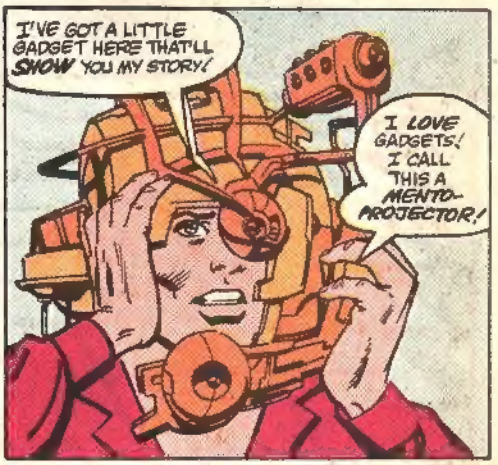
BUT, BELOW...
WHAM!

AND...
HERE, KIDS, LET ME HELP YOU!
WOW! IT'S TOGETHER AGAIN!
EVEN ON MY HOMEWORLD, I HAVE NEVER WITNESSED SUCH POWER!

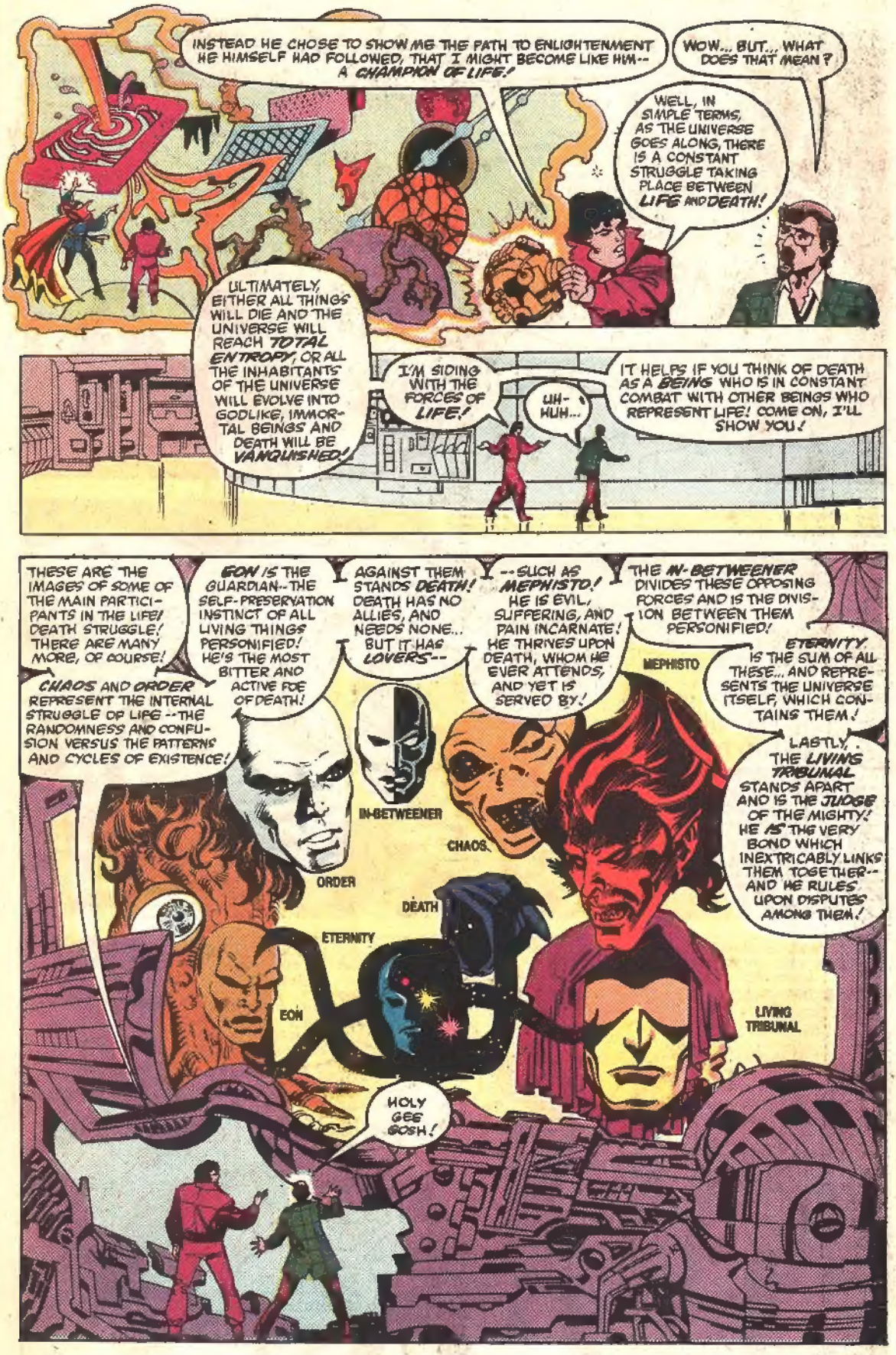
THAT WAS AMAZING! YOU'RE TERRIFIC!
THANKS! AND YOU'RE ALL PRETTY TERRIFIC, TOO! YOU ALL HAVE GREAT POWER -- AND ALEX, YOU ESPECIALLY HAVE WISDOM BEYOND YOUR YEARS!
GOOD NIGHT!
WAIT! WHO ARE YOU?
I AM CALLED THE BEYONDER!
NO PARKING
SOON...
HE'S BACK!
HEY! MISTER! I WANT TO TALK TO YOU!
PLEASE!
DARN IT! HE DIDN'T HEAR ME!
WHOOSH
OR DID HE...?
NOW WHAT? D-DO I GO IN, OR--
--OR GO HOME?!
HOMIE SOUNDS GOOD! THERE'S A LONI ANDERSON SPECIAL ON TV TONIGHT! I COULD JUST GO WATCH THAT...
...AND BE NOBODY SOME MORE...
BUT I'M DYING TO TALK TO THAT GUY! A JOURNALIST SHOULDN'T LET A LITTLE FEAR STOP HIM! THIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY--!
I'M GOING IN...
...CAUTIOUSLY!
A SCOOP SILENTLY SWOOPS DOWN TO COLLECT THE STARTLED REPORTER...
EYAHHH!

HELLO!
UH... HI! ARE--ARE YOU THE ONE I SAW F-FLYING?
YEP! THAT'S ME! WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?

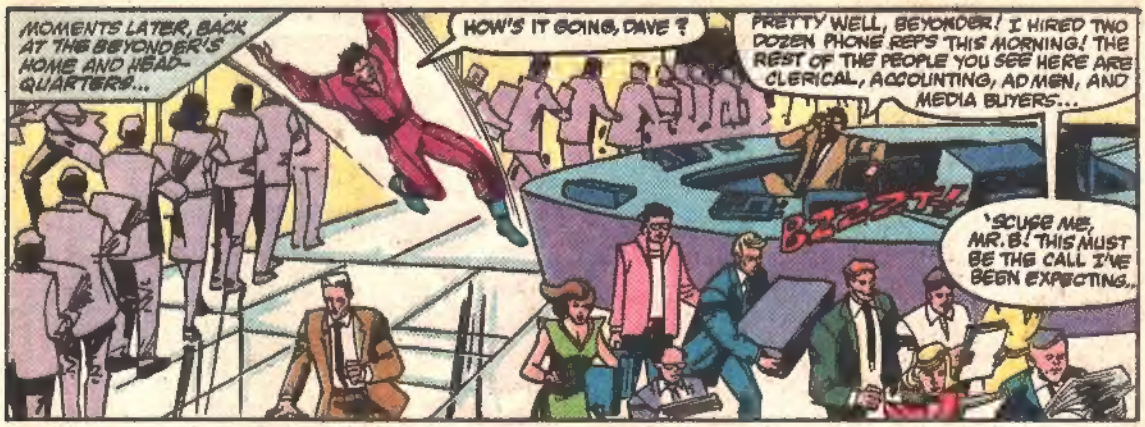
WELL, UH... IF YOU DON'T MIND, I-- I'D LIKE TO ASK YOU A FEW QUESTIONS...
L-LIKE WHO ARE YOU? HOW DO YOU FLY? HOW DID THIS BUILDING GET HERE SO QUICKLY?
PEOPLE CALL ME THE BEYONDER! I'M A CHAMPION OF LIFE! I'M FROM-- WAIT A MINUTE...


I'VE GOT A LITTLE GADGET HERE THAT'LL SHOW YOU MY STORY!
I LOVE GADGETS! I CALL THIS A MENTO-PROJECTOR!

"Ah! See? There I am in my own universe! That white blankness is me! I didn't have any physical form then, but I was lit back there—I didn't even know that anything else existed until . . .
"There! See that black burst? Some cosmic event poked open a pinhole into mine! Through the pinhole I saw the Earth! I watched, fascinated!
"Here I am, sometime later, on Park Avenue! I took human form and came here to study this many-layered universe—
"—especially this thing called desire, which is ubiquitous here but was new to me!
"That's me, after experiencing desire, trying to fulfill it, and failing! I was miserable!
"Then I heard of a guy who might be able to help me—a sage . . . a mystic . . . a sorcerer!
"No one seemed to know much about him! The few who knew of him at all spoke his name, no kidding, in whispers!
"That's him—Doctor Strange!
"So I started looking for him—rather drunkenly—and amazingly enough, I found him!
"He is far more, far greater than any in your multiverse suspect, as it turns out!
"At first, for a moment, he had me at a disadvantage! I was drunk, disoriented . . . uncaring! He might have been able to zap me off into a pocket dimension someplace, keep me constantly inebriated, and thus rid your multiverse of me forever!
"But, no—!"

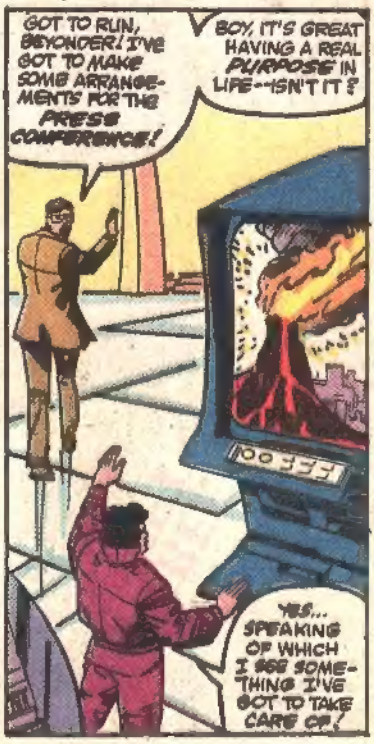

INSTEAD HE CHOSE TO SHOW ME THE PATH TO ENLIGHTENMENT HE HIMSELF HAD FOLLOWED, THAT I MIGHT BECOME LIKE HIM-- A CHAMPION OF LIFE!
WOW... BUT... WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?
WELL, IN SIMPLE TERMS, AS THE UNIVERSE GOES ALONG, THERE IS A CONSTANT STRUGGLE TAKING PLACE BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH!
ULTIMATELY, EITHER ALL THINGS WILL DIE AND THE UNIVERSE WILL REACH TOTAL ENTROPY, OR ALL THE INHABITANTS OF THE UNIVERSE WILL EVOLVE INTO GODLIKE, IMMORTAL BEINGS AND DEATH WILL BE VANQUISHED!
I'M SIDING WITH THE FORCES OF LIFE!
UH-HUH...
IT HELPS IF YOU THINK OF DEATH AS A BEING WHO IS IN CONSTANT COMBAT WITH OTHER BEINGS WHO REPRESENT LIFE! COME ON, I'LL SHOW YOU!
THESE ARE THE IMAGES OF SOME OF THE MAIN PARTICIPANTS IN THE LIFE/DEATH STRUGGLE! THERE ARE MANY MORE, OF COURSE!
CHAOS AND ORDER REPRESENT THE INTERNAL STRUGGLE OF LIFE--THE RANDOMNESS AND CONFUSION VERSUS THE PATTERNS AND CYCLES OF EXISTENCE!
EON IS THE GUARDIAN--THE SELF-PRESERVATION INSTINCT OF ALL LIVING THINGS PERSONIFIED! HE'S THE MOST BITTER AND ACTIVE FOE OF DEATH!
AGAINST THEM STANDS DEATH! DEATH HAS NO ALLIES, AND NEEDS NONE... BUT IT HAS LOVERS--
--SUCH AS MEPHISTO! HE IS EVIL, SUFFERING, AND PAIN INCARNATE! HE THRIVES UPON DEATH, WHOM HE EVER ATTENDS, AND YET IS SERVED BY!
THE IN-BETWEENER DIVIDES THESE OPPOSING FORCES AND IS THE DIVISION BETWEEN THEM PERSONIFIED!
ETERNITY IS THE SUM OF ALL THESE... AND REPRESENTS THE UNIVERSE ITSELF, WHICH CONTAINS THEM!
LASTLY, THE LIVING TRIBUNAL STANDS APART AND IS THE JUDGE OF THE MIGHTY! HE IS THE VERY BOND WHICH INEXTRICABLY LINKS THEM TOGETHER--AND HE RULES UPON DISPUTES AMONG THEM!
MEPHISTO
IN-BETWEENER
CHAOS
ORDER
DEATH
ETERNITY
EON
LIVING TRIBUNAL
HOLY GEE GOSH!

ARE THOSE GUYS... FOR REAL?
NOT IN THE SENSE THAT YOU AND I ARE! THEY'RE CONCEPTUAL BEINGS -- INSUBSTANTIAL AS AN IDEA YET POWERFUL BEYOND IMAGINING! ACTUAL BEINGS, ESPECIALLY LESSER ONES LIKE YOU, HAVE TROUBLE CONCEIVING OF THEM MUCH LESS UNDERSTANDING THEM!
WHAT YOU SAW WERE THEIR ESSENCES EXPRESSED IN REPRESENTATIONAL FORMS THAT YOU CAN RELATE TO!
THIS... IS OVER MY HEAD!
YES!
B-BUT I THINK I GOT ONE THING CLEARLY--! YOU'RE OUT TO HELP PRESERVE LIFE! YOU'RE ONE OF THE GOOD GUYS! I THINK THAT'S GREAT!
I -- I'VE ALREADY DREAMED OF DOING WHAT YOU'RE DOING! SOMETHING NOBLE... SOMETHING IMPORTANT!
THE HECK WITH JOURNALISM! I WANT TO HELP YOU! HERE'S WHAT I HAVE IN MIND...
THE NEXT DAY, AS A HUGE TSUNAMI, GIVEN BIRTH BY A MAJOR EARTHQUAKE AT SEA, THUNDERS TOWARD THE PORT CITY OF PERTH, AUSTRALIA --
-- A SMARTLY-DRESSED FIGURE SWOOPS TO THE RESCUE!
I SHOULD SHOUT SOMETHING... A BATTLE CRY! "FOR LIFE!" MAYBE...
NAH... THAT SOUNDS LIKE A JAIL SENTENCE OR AN INSURANCE COMPANY SLOGAN!
OH, WELL... I'LL THINK OF SOMETHING EVENTUALLY!

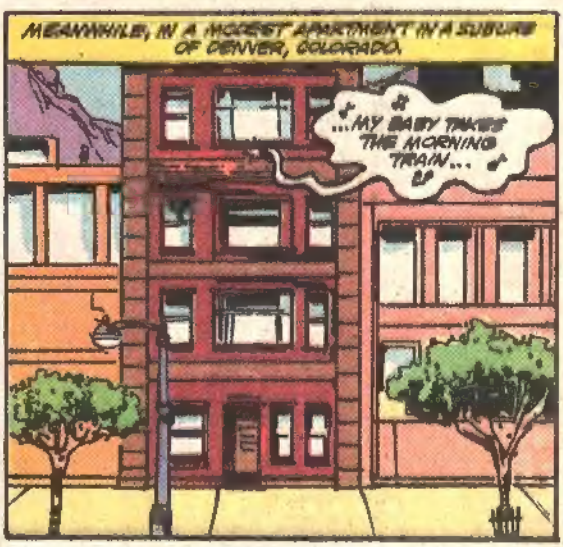

MOMENTS LATER, BACK AT THE BEYONDER'S HOME AND HEADQUARTERS...
HOW'S IT GOING, DAVE?
PRETTY WELL, BEYONDER! I HIRED TWO DOZEN PHONE REP'S THIS MORNING! THE REST OF THE PEOPLE YOU SEE HERE ARE CLERICAL, ACCOUNTING, ADMEN, AND MEDIA BUYERS...
BZZZT!
'SCUSE ME, MR. B! THIS MUST BE THE CALL I'VE BEEN EXPECTING...

YES..? HEL-LO, GOVERNOR! WHY, THANK YOU! I'M PLEASED THAT YOU'RE INTERESTED IN OUR ORGANIZATION AND ITS WORK!
LUNCH? OKAY... NO, THURSDAY'S BAD! I CAN FIT YOU IN A WEEK FROM TUESDAY! GOOD! SEE YOU THEN!

WHERE WAS I? OH, YEAH... WE'RE PRETTY WELL STAFFED-UP, NOW! BY TOMORROW WE'LL BE A HUNDRED PERCENT OPERATIONAL--
--A) GETTING THE WORD OUT ABOUT YOU, B) SCREENING THE CALLS THAT WILL COME POURING IN, AND C) PRIORITIZING THE REQUESTS FOR YOUR HELP!
SOUNDS GREAT...


GOT TO RUN, BEYONDER! I'VE GOT TO MAKE SOME ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PRESS CONFERENCE!
BOY, IT'S GREAT HAVING A REAL PURPOSE IN LIFE--ISN'T IT?
YES... SPEAKING OF WHICH I SEE SOMETHING I'VE GOT TO TAKE CARE OF!

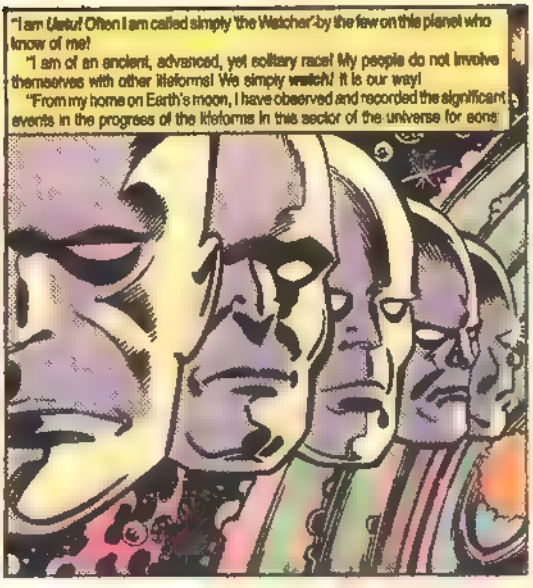
AND..
I DON'T REALLY NEED AN ORGANIZATION ANY MORE THAN I NEED MY CARS, PLANES AND OTHER GADGETS--BUT DAVE DOESN'T EVER HAVE TO KNOW THAT! HE'S SO HAPPY TO HAVE FOUND HIS "PURPOSE"!
I WONDER, THOUGH... HAVE I TRULY FOUND MINE? IT SEEMS LIKE I SHOULD BE DOING... SOMETHING MORE...

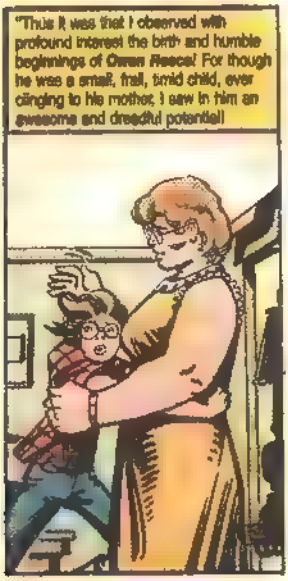

MEANWHILE, IN A MODEST APARTMENT IN A SUBURB OF DENVER, COLORADO...
♪ ...MY BABY TAKES THE MORNING TRAIN... ♪

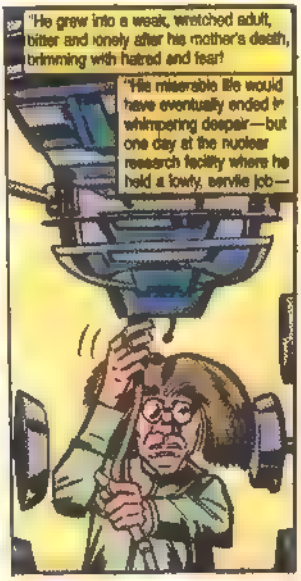
...HE WORKS FROM NINE TO FIVE AND THEN HE TAKES ANOTHER HOME AGAIN. SLURP!
HURRY UP, OWIE! EVERY-THING'S READY!
MARSHA! LOVEY-BUNNY, I'M HOME!
...TO FIND ME-G WAITIN' FOR YOU--!
HEWWO SNOOKUMS-PIE! I MISSED OO! SMKK! HOW WAS OO DAY?
EH! OKAY... SWEPT UP OUTSIDE THE CONTAINMENT... HELPED UNLOAD A SHIPMENT OF FUEL FOR THE REACTOR... I MISSED YOU, TOO.
IS SOME-THING THE MATTER, BABY? YOU SEEM... UPSET.
AW... IT'S JUST THIS--!
HIM AGAIN! IS HE DOING SOMETHING WRONG, OWIE?
WELL... I--I DON'T KNOW! I JUST GET THE FEELING THAT IT'S GOING TO LEAD TO TROUBLE!
WHY CAN'T HE JUST RELAX AND KEEP A LOW PROFILE? HE'S NOT GOING TO FIND HAPPI-NESS OR WHATEVER HE'S LOOKING FOR THIS WAY!
DENVER POST
"BEYONDER" TO FIGHT "FOR LIFE"
HEADQUARTERS COMPLEX MYSTERIOUSLY APPEARS NEAR ST. LOUIS
MYSTERY FIGURE PROCLAIMS SELF "CHAMPION OF LIFE"
AW... RATS! I MEANT TO BRING YOU SOME MORE FLOWERS TODAY! I WAS SO UPSET, I FORGOT!
IT'S OKAY, CUDDLE-POT, THEY'RE STILL-- OH, NO!
OUR DINNER!
OH! I COOKED ALL YOUR FAVORITES, TOO!
DON'T WORRY, DARLING-- I'LL FIX IT! THERE!
THANKS, LOVEY! I KNOW HOW YOU HATE TO RESORT TO YOUR MOLECULE POWER!
WELL, JUST THIS ONCE!

SHORTLY...
CUPCAKE, YOU'RE NOT EATING--! WHAT'S WRONG?
IT--IT'S NOTHING, MARSHA!
PLEASE, OWIE, TELL ME!
ALL RIGHT...
THE WHO--?
THE WATCHER IS HERE!
"THE WATCHER!" AND I FIND IT PRETTY DARN ANNOYING!
OWIE, UH... I DON'T SEE ANYONE...
OH, HE'S HERE ALL RIGHT!
COME ON, SHOW YOURSELF--! OR I'LL MAKE YOU VISIBLE!
NOW!
AS YOU WISH, OWEN REECE!
I HAD HOPED YOU WOULD JOIN ME ON THE ASTRAL PLANE, THAT WE MIGHT COMMUNICATE IN PRIVATE!
I HAVE NO SECRETS FROM MARSHA! BESIDES, I'M IGNORING YOU! GO AWAY!

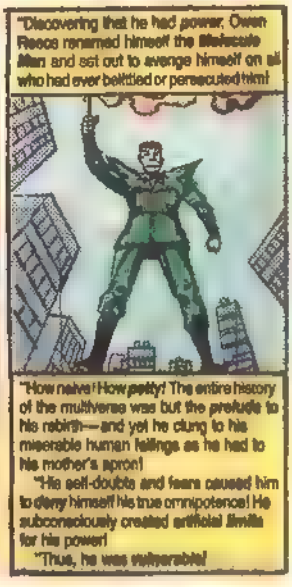
PLEASE LISTEN TO ME!
I'LL LISTEN TO YOU IF YOU'LL TELL ME WHAT THE HECK IS GOING ON HERE!
NO!
VERY WELL...

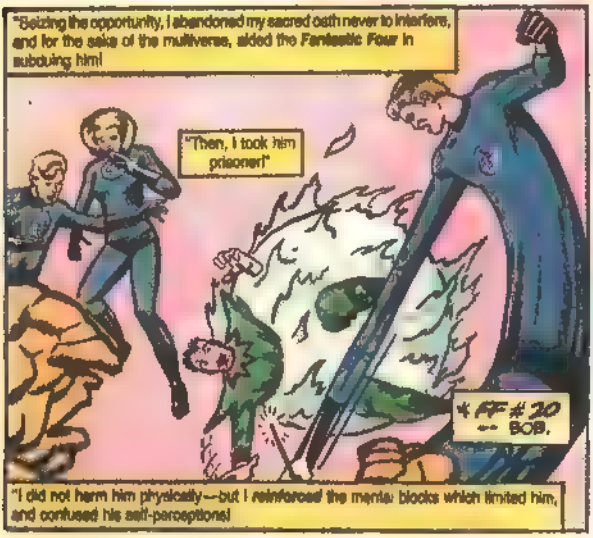

"I am Uatu! Often I am called simply 'the Watcher'-by the few on this planet who know of me!
"I am of an ancient, advanced, yet solitary race! My people do not involve themselves with other lifeforms! We simply watch! It is our way!
"From my home on Earth's moon, I have observed and recorded the significant events in the progress of the lifeforms in this sector of the universe for eons!

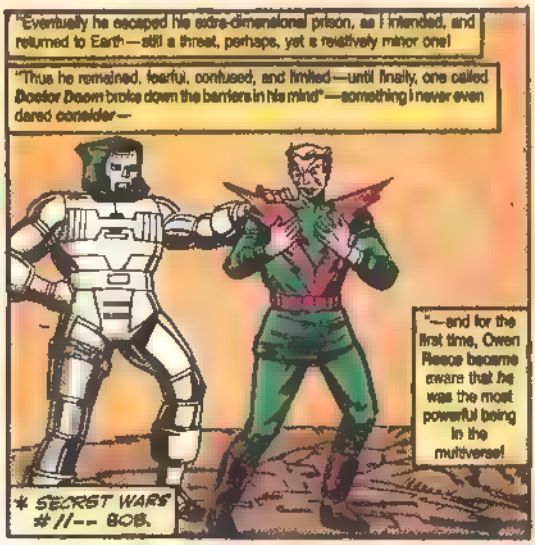

"Thus it was that I observed with profound interest the birth and humble beginnings of Owen Reece! For though he was a small, frail, timid child, ever clinging to his mother, I saw in him an awesome and dreadful potential!


"He grew into a weak, wretched adult, bitter and lonely after his mother's death, brimming with hatred and fear!
"His miserable life would have eventually ended in whimpering despair—but one day at the nuclear research facility where he held a lowly, servile job—

"—there was an event an accident . . . !
"A burst of energy that should have killed him instead served to unlock the potential inside him!
"This was the true birth of Owen Reece—an event which shook the universe, nay, the multiverse to its foundations, and made the mighty tremble!

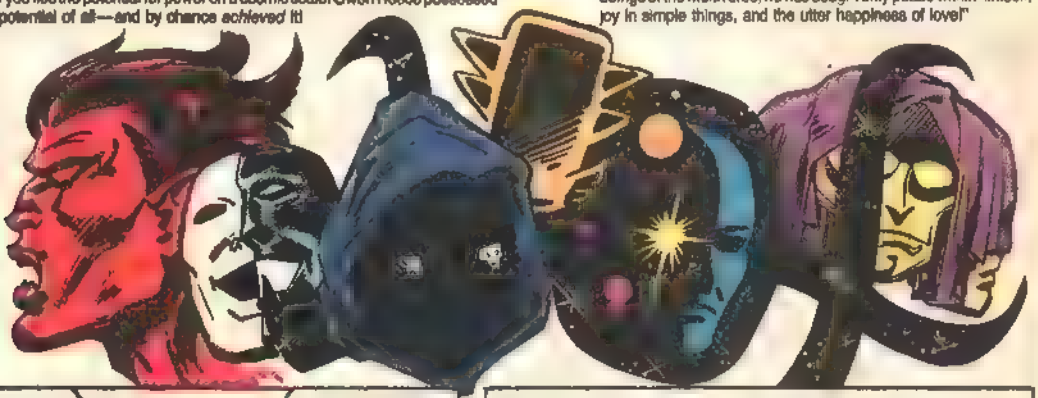

"Discovering that he had power, Owen Reece renamed himself the Molecule Man and set out to avenge himself on all who had ever belittled or persecuted him!
"How naive! How petty! The entire history of the multiverse was but the prelude to his rebirth—and yet he clung to his miserable human failings as he had to his mother's apron!
"His self-doubts and fears caused him to deny himself his true omnipotence! He subconsciously created artificial limits for his power!
"Thus, he was vulnerable!

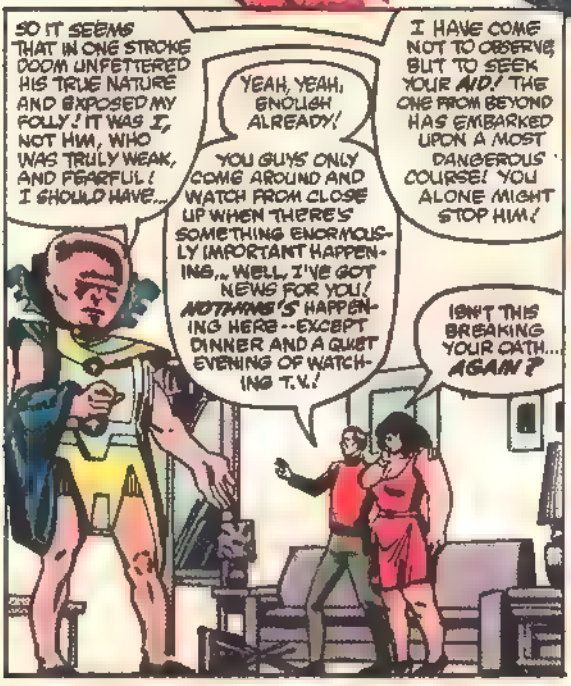

"Seizing the opportunity, I abandoned my sacred oath never to interfere, and for the sake of the multiverse, aided the Fantastic Four in subduing him!
"Then, I took him prisoner!"
* FF # 20 -- BOB.
"I did not harm him physically—but I reinforced the mental blocks which limited him, and confused his self-perceptions!


"Eventually he escaped his extra-dimensional prison, as I intended, and returned to Earth—still a threat, perhaps, yet a relatively minor one!
"Thus he remained, fearful, confused, and limited—until finally, one called Doctor Doom broke down the barriers in his mind"—something I never even dared consider—
"—and for the first time, Owen Reece became aware that he was the most powerful being in the multiverse!
* SECRET WARS #11 -- BOB.

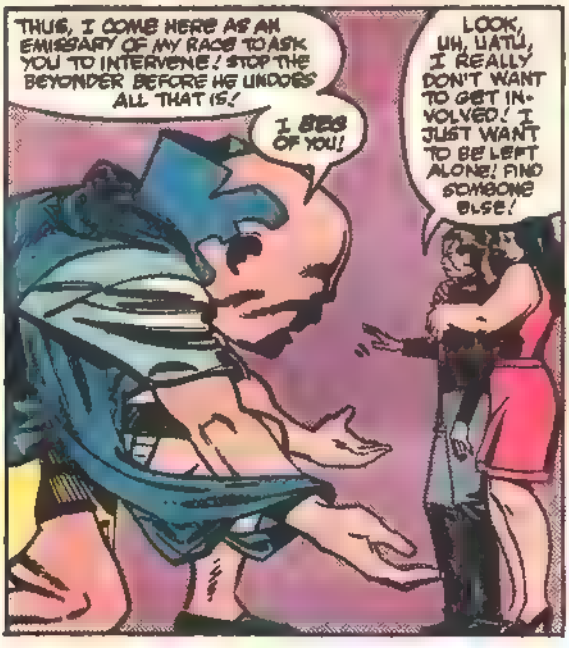
"It is less astonishing than you think, Marsha Rosenberg! Though your race is backward, within each of you lies the potential for power on a cosmic scale! Owen Reece possessed the greatest potential of all—and by chance achieved it!

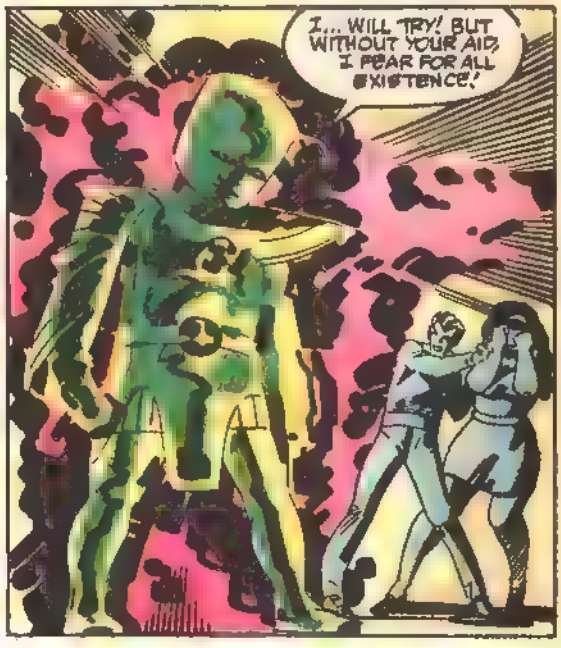
"And now that he is and knows he is mightier than all other beings of the Multiverse, he has sought only peace within himself, joy in simple things, and the utter happiness of love!"




SO IT SEEMS THAT IN ONE STROKE DOOM UNFETTERED HIS TRUE NATURE AND EXPOSED MY FOLLY! IT WAS I, NOT HIM, WHO WAS TRULY WEAK, AND FEARFUL! I SHOULD HAVE...
YEAH, YEAH, ENOUGH ALREADY!
YOU GUYS ONLY COME AROUND AND WATCH FROM CLOSE UP WHEN THERE'S SOMETHING ENORMOUSLY IMPORTANT HAPPENING,.. WELL, I'VE GOT NEWS FOR YOU! NOTHING'S HAPPENING HERE--EXCEPT DINNER AND A QUIET EVENING OF WATCHING T.V.!
I HAVE COME NOT TO OBSERVE, BUT TO SEEK YOUR AID! THE ONE FROM BEYOND HAS EMBARKED UPON A MOST DANGEROUS COURSE! YOU ALONE MIGHT STOP HIM!
ISN'T THIS BREAKING YOUR OATH... AGAIN?

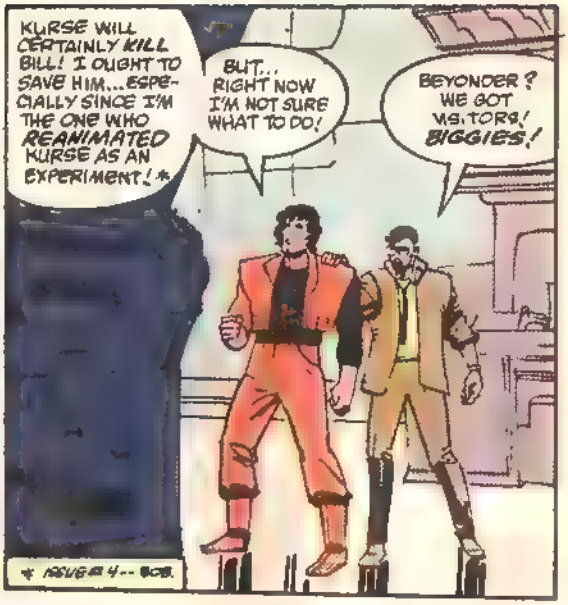
BEHOLD, OWEN REECE! ONLY MOMENTS AGO, ALL OF MY KIND GATHERED IN COUNCIL TO CONSIDER THE DANGER FACING THE MULTIVERSE! IT WAS AGREED UNANIMOUSLY THAT WE MUST ACT TO TRY AND AVERT THE IMPENDING CATASTROPHE!

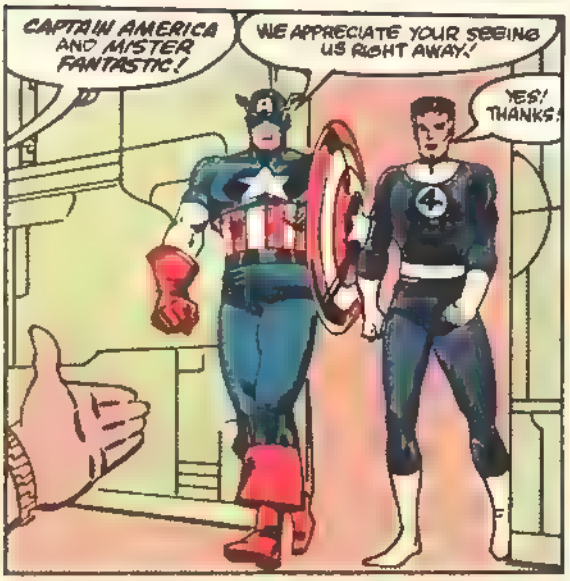

THUS, I COME HERE AS AN EMISSARY OF MY RACE TO ASK YOU TO INTERVENE! STOP THE BEYONDER BEFORE HE UNDOES ALL THAT IS!
I BEG OF YOU!
LOOK, UH, UATU, I REALLY DON'T WANT TO GET INVOLVED! I JUST WANT TO BE LEFT ALONE! FIND SOMEONE ELSE!

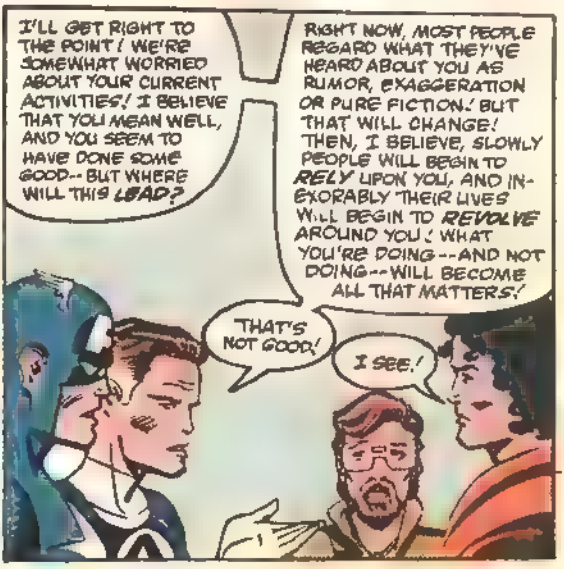


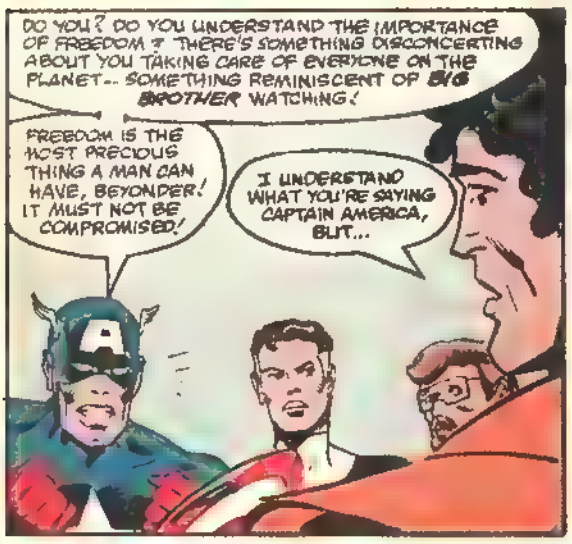
MEANWHILE, IN A FAMINE-STRICKEN EAST AFRICAN VILLAGE...
<THIS WILL TIDE YOU OVER UNTIL NEXT HARVEST!>*
<IT IS MIRACULOUS!>
<OUR ETERNAL THANKS, ONE-FROM-BEYOND!>
* TRANSLATED, OF COURSE -- BOB.
MINUTES LATER IN A MEDICAL RESEARCH LABORATORY IN PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA...
SEE? THE CHILD'S AILMENT IS ACTUALLY A NUTRITIONAL PROBLEM AND NOT A DISEASE!
AMAZING!
I--I'M STILL NOT CLEAR ON WHO YOU ARE...OR HOW YOU KNEW OF OUR PROBLEM HERE...
WHO CARES! HE'S SAVED A CHILD'S LIFE!
STILL LATER, IN A GALAXY FAR, FAR AWAY...
<MAKES STELLAR WIND COLLECTOR! GIVES THIS TO US!>*
<SOLVES ENERGY DEFICIENCY ON DARK-SIDE.>
* AGAIN, TRANSLATED -- BOB.
SOON, AT BHQ...
NOT BAD...
BEYOND BELIEF!!
HELLO, DAVE!
BEYONDER, BUDDY, WE'RE A HIT! LOOK AT ALL THIS BUSINESS!
YES...I SEE!
GEE, YOU DON'T EXACTLY SOUND THRILLED! IS IT TOO MUCH WORK?
NO, THAT'S NOT IT, DAVE! I CAN HANDLE ALL THAT AND MORE, NO PROBLEM! IN FACT, I'VE BEEN DOING JOBS IN OTHER GALAXIES THE ONES YOU'RE AWARE OF!
BUT I'M STILL UNCERTAIN ABOUT ALL THIS! I DON'T KNOW YET EXACTLY WHAT MY ROLE IS IN THE FIGHT FOR LIFE!
DR. STRANGE SEEMS TO SENSE THE WAY OF THINGS IN THE MULTI-VERSE -- BE IN TUNE WITH THE WORKINGS OF THE UNIVERSE -- AND HE KNOWS WHAT TO DO! HE KNOWS HIS ROLE!
FOR SOME REASON, I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO DISCERN THE WAY OF THINGS... OR SENSE A PLACE FOR MYSELF--! BUT I MUST HAVE A ROLE!
I MUST -- OR I'LL FALL INTO DESPAIR AGAIN! I KNOW IT!
UH-OH... TROUBLE IN NEW YORK!

IT'S KURSE! HE'S ATTACKING BETA RAY BILL!
OBVIOUSLY KURSE HAS MISTAKEN BETA RAY BILL FOR THOR, WHOM HE DESPISES! BILL'S HAMMER MUST BE CONFUSING HIM...

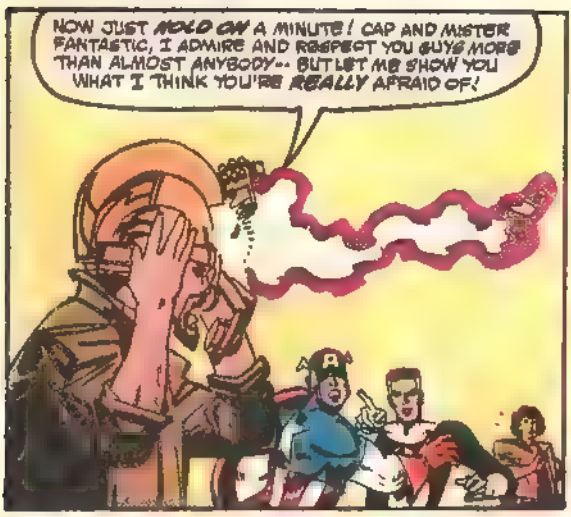

KURSE WILL CERTAINLY KILL BILL! I OUGHT TO SAVE HIM...ESPECIALLY SINCE I'M THE ONE WHO REANIMATED KURSE AS AN EXPERIMENT! *
BUT... RIGHT NOW I'M NOT SURE WHAT TO DO!
BEYONDER? WE GOT VISITORS! BIGGIES!
* ASVEN #4-- BOB.


CAPTAIN AMERICA AND MISTER FANTASTIC!
WE APPRECIATE YOUR SEEING US RIGHT AWAY!
YES! THANKS.


I'LL GET RIGHT TO THE POINT! WE'RE SOMEWHAT WORRIED ABOUT YOUR CURRENT ACTIVITIES! I BELIEVE THAT YOU MEAN WELL, AND YOU SEEM TO HAVE DONE SOME GOOD-- BUT WHERE WILL THIS LEAD?
RIGHT NOW, MOST PEOPLE REGARD WHAT THEY'VE HEARD ABOUT YOU AS RUMOR, EXAGGERATION OR PURE FICTION! BUT THAT WILL CHANGE! THEN, I BELIEVE, SLOWLY PEOPLE WILL BEGIN TO RELY UPON YOU, AND INEXORABLY THEIR LIVES WILL BEGIN TO REVOLVE AROUND YOU! WHAT YOU'RE DOING--AND NOT DOING--WILL BECOME ALL THAT MATTERS!
THAT'S NOT GOOD!
I SEE!

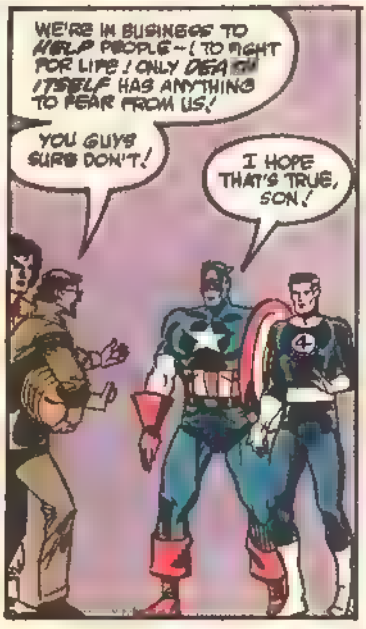

DO YOU? DO YOU UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF FREEDOM? THERE'S SOMETHING DISCONCERTING ABOUT YOU TAKING CARE OF EVERYONE ON THE PLANET-- SOMETHING REMINISCENT OF BIG BROTHER WATCHING!
FREEDOM IS THE MOST PRECIOUS THING A MAN CAN HAVE, BEYONDER! IT MUST NOT BE COMPROMISED!
I UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'RE SAYING CAPTAIN AMERICA, BUT...

BUT WHAT?
IS THERE NOTHING FOR ME--? NO ROLE, NO PLACE IN THE UNIVERSE, NO SUITABLE PURPOSE?
UH-OH THIS ISN'T LOOKING GOOD!


NOW JUST HOLD ON A MINUTE! CAP AND MISTER FANTASTIC, I ADMIRE AND RESPECT YOU GUYS MORE THAN ALMOST ANYBODY-- BUT LET ME SHOW YOU WHAT I THINK YOU'RE REALLY AFRAID OF!

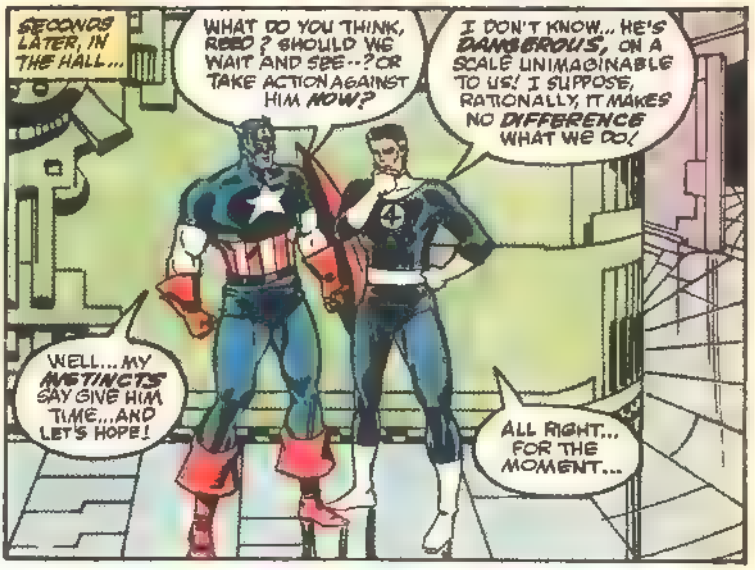
THERE! YOU'RE JUST AFRAID THAT THE BEYONDER IS GOING TO STEAL YOUR THUNDER, PUSH YOU AND ALL YOUR BUDDIES ASIDE AND TAKE OVER THE LIMELIGHT AS THE GREATEST HERO OF ALL!

WELL, I CAN'T GUARANTEE THAT HE WON'T GAIN SOME GLORY IN THE PROCESS OF DOING HIS-- I MEAN OUR WORK-- BUT THAT'S NOT THE POINT!


WE'RE IN BUSINESS TO HELP PEOPLE-- (TO FIGHT FOR LIFE! ONLY DEATH ITSELF HAS ANYTHING TO FEAR FROM US!
YOU GUYS SURE DON'T!
I HOPE THAT'S TRUE, SON!

BELIEVE ME, I'VE ALREADY BEEN GIVING WHAT I'M DOING A LOT OF THOUGHT! I'LL KEEP THE THINGS YOU SAID IN MIND.. OKAY?
THAT'S A START...

THANKS FOR HEARING US OUT! WE'LL SEE OURSELVES TO THE DOOR!
BYE, CAP! GOOD-BYE, MISTER F! IT WAS REALLY AN HONOR TO MEET YOU!


SECONDS LATER, IN THE HALL...
WHAT DO YOU THINK, REED? SHOULD WE WAIT AND SEE--? OR TAKE ACTION AGAINST HIM NOW?
I DON'T KNOW.. HE'S DANGEROUS, ON A SCALE UNIMAGINABLE TO US! I SUPPOSE, RATIONALLY, IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE WHAT WE DO!
WELL... MY INSTINCTS SAY GIVE HIM TIME...AND LET'S HOPE!
ALL RIGHT... FOR THE MOMENT...

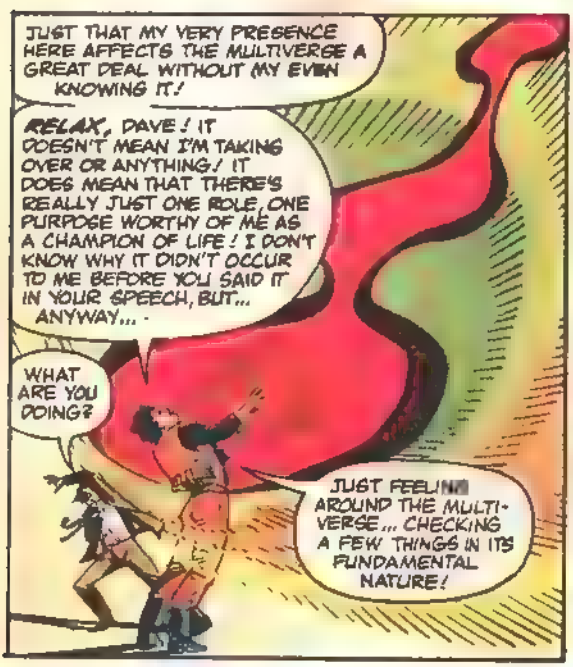
HMM... APPARENTLY, WHILE WE WERE TALKING, BETA RAY BILL ESCAPED DEATH AT THE HANDS OF KURSE BY REVERTING TO HIS CIVILIAN-- IF ALIEN-- GUISE!
KURSE HAS NO INTEREST IN HIM NOW THAT HE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE THOR ANYMORE!
AT LEAST I DON'T HAVE TO MAKE A DECISION ABOUT KURSE YET... NOT UNTIL HE FINDS THE REAL THOR!
BEYONDER! COME ON! IT'S TIME FOR OUR PRESS CONFERENCE! THERE'S TONS OF MEDIA HERE! I HAD TO PUT 'EM IN THE CONCERT HALL UPSTAIRS!
SOON...
...SO, I JUST WANT TO HELP MANKIND AND OTHER KINDS... NOT BECOME A "BIG BROTHER," OR...
UH, EXCUSE ME, BEYONDER, BUT MAYBE I SHOULD JUMP IN HERE!
TELL YOU WHAT, BEYONDER-- I GIVE 'EM A SAMPLE OF WHAT YOU CAN DO!
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, YOU'LL HAVE TO PARDON MY FRIEND AND PARTNER! THIS IS DIFFICULT FOR HIM... UH, BECAUSE HE'S FAR TOO MODEST!
WELL... ALL RIGHT, HOW ABOUT THIS?
THE CROWD GASPS AS ONE.
THAT GOT A "RISE" OUT OF YOU FOLKS, HUH? HEY, HOW'S THE WEATHER UP THERE? HA-HA!
OKAY, BEYONDER, PUT 'EM BACK!
EVERYBODY SEATED AGAIN? GOOD! DIDN'T MEAN TO LEAVE YOU HANGING! HA-HA!
BUT, SERIOUSLY... REMEMBER THE "UPLIFTING EXPERIENCE" YOU JUST HAD AND CONSIDER THIS-- IN SIMPLE TERMS, AS THE UNIVERSE GOES ALONG, THERE IS A CONSTANT STRUGGLE TAKING PLACE BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH!
IT HELPS IF YOU THINK OF DEATH AS A BEING WHO'S IN CONSTANT COMBAT WITH-- WELL, MANY WHO REPRESENT LIFE!
WE'RE HERE TO TELL YOU TODAY, THAT WITH THE POWER YOU'VE JUST WITNESSED A SMALL SAMPLE OF, WE'RE SIDING WITH THE FORCES OF LIFE! AND WE'RE NOT GOING TO STOP FIGHTING UNTIL DEATH IS VANQUISHED!
THAT'S RIGHT, DAVE!

THAT'S RIGHT!
WE'RE GOING TO VANQUISH DEATH! THIS I SWEAR TO YOU, BY THE POWER OF BEYOND!
ISN'T HE GREAT, FOLKS? LET'S HEAR IT FOR HIM! LET'S HEAR IT FOR THE ONE FROM BEYOND!

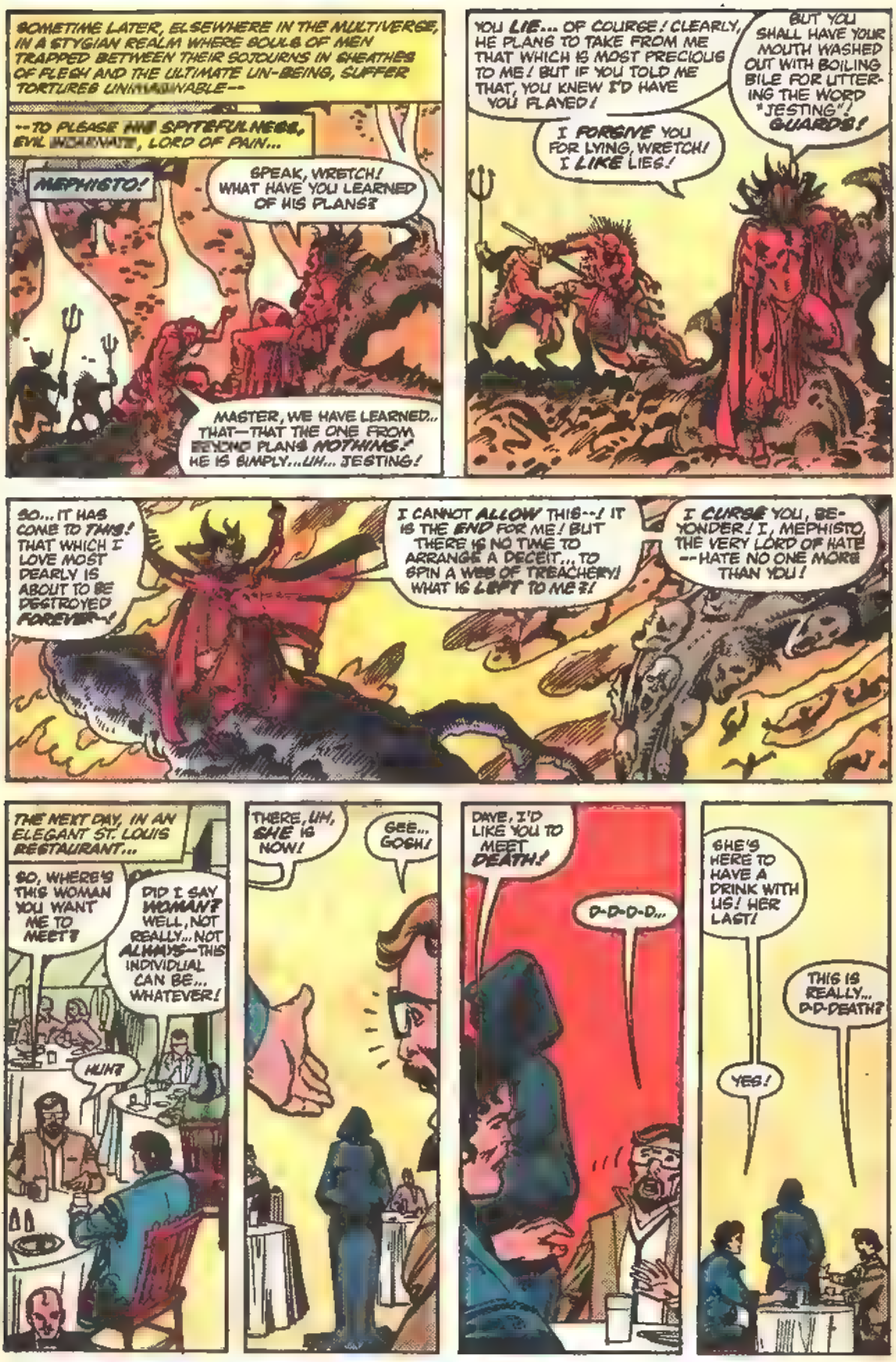
SECONDS LATER...
HURRY UP!
OUT OF MY WAY!
GOTTA GET TO A PHONE!

AND, INSIDE...
THANKS, DAVE! YOU WERE TERRIFIC! YOU REALLY INSPIRED ME!
I DID—? GEE...

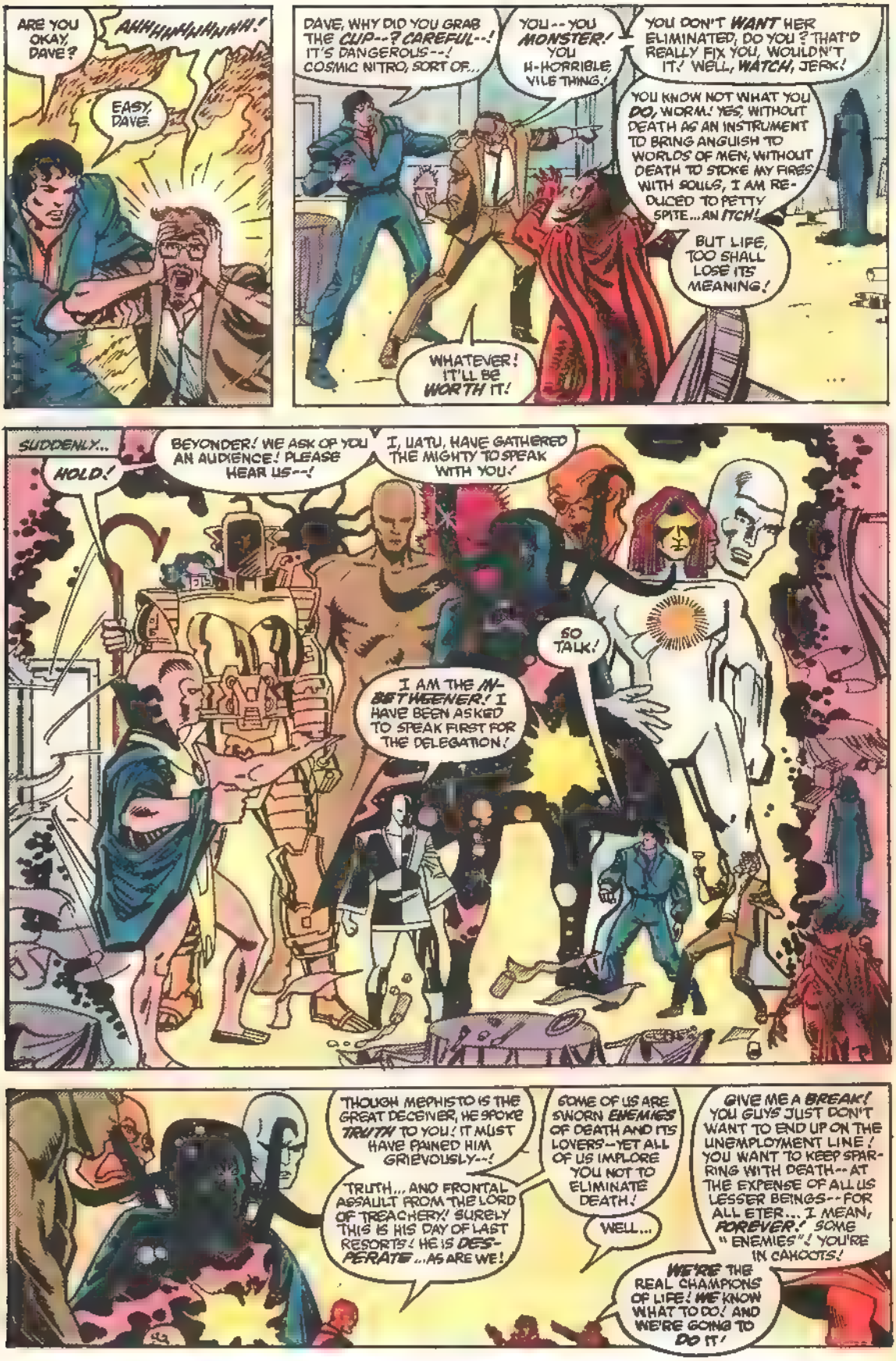
WHILE YOU WERE TALKING, I FINALLY REALIZED WHY I CAN'T GET IN TOUCH WITH THE WAY OF THINGS IN THE MULTIVERSE! IT'S BECAUSE I'M BIGGER THAN THE MULTIVERSE, AND MORE POWERFUL THAN ALL OF THE FORCES IN IT, OF EVERY KIND, COMBINED! AS LONG AS I'M HERE, THE "WAY" OF THE MULTIVERSE IS MY WAY!
WH-WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?


JUST THAT MY VERY PRESENCE HERE AFFECTS THE MULTIVERSE A GREAT DEAL WITHOUT MY EVEN KNOWING IT!
RELAX, DAVE! IT DOESN'T MEAN I'M TAKING OVER OR ANYTHING! IT DOES MEAN THAT THERE'S REALLY JUST ONE ROLE, ONE PURPOSE WORTHY OF ME AS A CHAMPION OF LIFE! I DON'T KNOW WHY IT DIDN'T OCCUR TO ME BEFORE YOU SAID IT IN YOUR SPEECH, BUT... ANYWAY...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
JUST FEELING AROUND THE MULTIVERSE... CHECKING A FEW THINGS IN ITS FUNDAMENTAL NATURE!

LET'S SEE... YES, IT CAN BE DONE! IT'LL TAKE SOME PREPARATION, AND A LOT OF DETAILING AFTERWARD... BUT I CAN DO IT! EASILY!
IT'S A BIG STEP... AND ONCE IT'S DONE, IT'S FOREVER! BUT I SHALL DO IT!

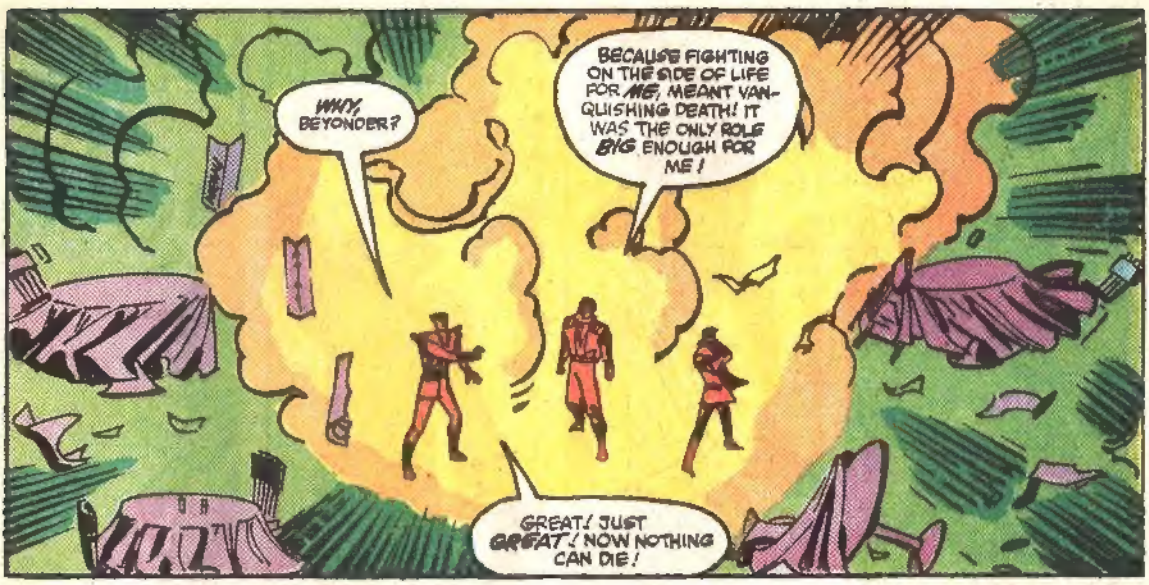

SOMETIME LATER, ELSEWHERE IN THE MULTIVERSE, IN A STYGIAN REALM WHERE SOULS OF MEN TRAPPED BETWEEN THEIR SOJOURNS IN SHEATHES OF FLESH AND THE ULTIMATE UN-BEING, SUFFER TORTURES UNIMAGINABLE--
--TO PLEASE HIS SPITEFULNESS, EVIL INCARNATE, LORD OF PAIN...
MEPHISTO!
SPEAK, WRETCH! WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED OF HIS PLANS?
MASTER, WE HAVE LEARNED... THAT--THAT THE ONE FROM BEYOND PLANS NOTHING! HE IS SIMPLY...UH... JESTING!
YOU LIE... OF COURSE! CLEARLY, HE PLANS TO TAKE FROM ME THAT WHICH IS MOST PRECIOUS TO ME! BUT IF YOU TOLD ME THAT, YOU KNEW I'D HAVE YOU FLAYED!
I FORGIVE YOU FOR LYING, WRETCH! I LIKE LIES!
BUT YOU SHALL HAVE YOUR MOUTH WASHED OUT WITH BOILING BILE FOR UTTERING THE WORD "JESTING"! GUARDS!
SO... IT HAS COME TO THIS! THAT WHICH I LOVE MOST DEARLY IS ABOUT TO BE DESTROYED FOREVER--!
I CANNOT ALLOW THIS--! IT IS THE END FOR ME! BUT THERE IS NO TIME TO ARRANGE A DECEIT... TO SPIN A WEB OF TREACHERY! WHAT IS LEFT TO ME?!
I CURSE YOU, BEYONDER! I, MEPHISTO, THE VERY LORD OF HATE --HATE NO ONE MORE THAN YOU!
THE NEXT DAY, IN AN ELEGANT ST. LOUIS RESTAURANT...
SO, WHERE'S THIS WOMAN YOU WANT ME TO MEET?
DID I SAY WOMAN? WELL, NOT REALLY... NOT ALWAYS--THIS INDIVIDUAL CAN BE... WHATEVER!
HUH?
THERE, UH, SHE IS NOW!
GEE... GOSH!
DAVE, I'D LIKE YOU TO MEET DEATH!
D-D-D-D...
SHE'S HERE TO HAVE A DRINK WITH US! HER LAST!
THIS IS REALLY... D-D-DEATH?
YES!

ONCE SHE'S GONE, OF COURSE, SOME CHANGES WILL HAVE TO BE MADE! ALL LIVING THINGS WILL HAVE TO BE MODIFIED A BIT...
YOU KNOW...PREDATION WILL BE HISTORY! SO WILL GRAZING, FOR THAT MATTER. AND FUNG! WILL HAVE TO CHANGE!
IT'LL TAKE SOME WORK! BUT IT'LL BE WORTH IT!
A FINE WINE, THIS— A BIT FORTHRIGHT, PERHAPS, BUT SOMEWHAT AMUSING IN ITS ARROGANCE...
NONETHELESS, LACED WITH MY ENERGIES, IT WILL BE A BITTER CUP... FOR DEATH!
HERE! DRINK!
BEYONDER, ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THIS?! I MEAN -- NO MORE DEATH--? OF ANYTHING--? EVER?!
NOW!
NOW, WHILE MUCH OF HIS POWER IS IN THAT CUP!
DESTROY HIM!
MEPHISTO! AND A HORDE OF DEMONS!
RUN, DAVE! RUN!
TOO LATE, BEYOND-SCUM!
DEATH! GET THE CUP ASIDE, BELOVED, BUT OUT OF THE BEYONDER'S REACH!
THOUGH THAT CURSED GOBLET CONTAINS MUCH OF YOUR POWER, BEYONDER, STILL I KNOW BETTER THAN TO RISK ATTACKING YOU!--
EEYARGHH!
SO... HOW MUCH AGONY MUST I INFLICT UPON YOUR IDIOT FRIEND BEFORE YOU ARE READY TO BARGAIN, EH?
YOU UNDERESTIMATE ME, MEPHISTO!
EVEN A SMALL FRACTION OF MY POWER IS ENOUGH TO BLOW YOUR HORDE BACK TO THE DEPTHS, BATTER YOU INTO HELPLESS SUBMISSION--
--AND FREE DAVE!


ARE YOU OKAY, DAVE?
AHHHHHHHHHH!
EASY, DAVE.
DAVE, WHY DID YOU GRAB THE CUP--? CAREFUL--! IT'S DANGEROUS--! COSMIC NITRO, SORT OF...
YOU--YOU MONSTER! YOU H-HORRIBLE, VILE THING!
YOU DON'T WANT HER ELIMINATED, DO YOU? THAT'D REALLY FIX YOU, WOULDN'T IT! WELL, WATCH, JERK!
YOU KNOW NOT WHAT YOU DO, WORM! YES, WITHOUT DEATH AS AN INSTRUMENT TO BRING ANGUISH TO WORLDS OF MEN, WITHOUT DEATH TO STOKE MY FIRES WITH SOULS, I AM REDUCED TO PETTY SPITE...AN ITCH!
BUT LIFE, TOO SHALL LOSE ITS MEANING!
WHATEVER! IT'LL BE WORTH IT!
SUDDENLY...
HOLD!
BEYONDER! WE ASK OF YOU AN AUDIENCE! PLEASE HEAR US--!
I, UATU, HAVE GATHERED THE MIGHTY TO SPEAK WITH YOU!
SO TALK!
I AM THE IN-BETWEENER! I HAVE BEEN ASKED TO SPEAK FIRST FOR THE DELEGATION!
THOUGH MEPHISTO IS THE GREAT DECEIVER, HE SPOKE TRUTH TO YOU! IT MUST HAVE PAINED HIM GRIEVOUSLY--!
TRUTH... AND FRONTAL ASSAULT FROM THE LORD OF TREACHERY! SURELY THIS IS HIS DAY OF LAST RESORTS! HE IS DESPERATE...AS ARE WE!
SOME OF US ARE SWORN ENEMIES OF DEATH AND ITS LOVERS--YET ALL OF US IMPLORE YOU NOT TO ELIMINATE DEATH!
WELL...
GIVE ME A BREAK! YOU GUYS JUST DON'T WANT TO END UP ON THE UNEMPLOYMENT LINE! YOU WANT TO KEEP SPARRING WITH DEATH--AT THE EXPENSE OF ALL US LESSER BEINGS--FOR ALL ETER... I MEAN, FOREVER! SOME "ENEMIES"! YOU'RE IN CAHOOTS!
WE'RE THE REAL CHAMPIONS OF LIFE! WE KNOW WHAT TO DO! AND WE'RE GOING TO DO IT!

I, ETERNITY, AM ENEMY TO NONE! I TAKE NO SIDES, FOR I ENCOMPASS ALL! THEREFORE, IT IS MY DESTINY WE CONSIDER HERE--MY DESTINY YOU HOLD IN YOUR HANDS, O ONE WHO SPEAKS FOR THE ONE FROM BEYOND!
I WOULD HAVE THE CUP PASS FROM DEATH! PLEASE!
LOOK, I'M SORRY, MISTER E, BUT... MY MIND'S MADE UP! SEE, YOU GUYS ARE JUST CONCEPTUAL ENTITIES! YOU'RE NOT EVEN REAL, IN THE SENSE THAT WE ARE! YOU CAN'T CONCEIVE OF WHAT DEATH IS TO US ACTUAL BEINGS! IT'S... OVER YOUR HEADS!
HERE, DEATH! DRINK UP!
DAVE, UH... A LOT OF MY POWER IS IN THAT CUP...
YES, BUT YOU MUST STILL BE STRONGER THAN EVERYBODY ELSE IN THIS ROOM COMBINED, OR THEY'D HAVE JUMPED US BY NOW!
TRUE... BUT THE POINT IS... ONCE THIS IS DONE, I WON'T HAVE ENOUGH POWER TO UNDO IT! I CAN'T BRING HER BACK!
SO...?
THE ONE FROM BEYOND NODS HIS ASSENT...
AND...
THAT'S IT!
NOOOOOOO!

DO YOU SENSE IT? IT BEGINS!
THE ABSENCE OF DEATH RIPPLES THROUGH THE ETHER LIKE A SHOCKWAVE!
THE SIMPLER LIFE-FORMS ARE ALREADY AFFECTED! THE ENERGY-SUSTAINED FORMS... PLANTS...
SOON, THE FULL EFFECT WILL REACH ALL LIFE IN THE MULTIVERSE!
THUS PASSETH THE OLD WAY!
AT THAT MOMENT, A THOUSAND MILES WEST...
OWIE, BABY--! WHEN DID YOU GET THESE NEW FLOWERS?
I--I DIDN'T!
LET ME SEE THOSE!
THESE ARE THE SAME FLOWERS--! THE ONES THAT WERE ALL WILTED!
THEY LOOK FRESH NOW!
OH... NO... HE... DIDN'T--!
I'VE GOT TO GO, MARSHA! NOW!
B-BUT WHY?
I'LL TELL YOU LATER... I HOPE!
AND...
BEHOLD! OWEN REECE... THE MOLECULE MAN!
STAND ASIDE! LET HIM PASS!
HELLO, EVERYONE!
IF YOU WOULDN'T MIND, I'D LIKE TO SPEAK TO THE BEYONDER AND HIS FRIEND ALONE!


WHY, BEYONDER?
BECAUSE FIGHTING ON THE SIDE OF LIFE FOR ME, MEANT VANQUISHING DEATH! IT WAS THE ONLY ROLE BIG ENOUGH FOR ME!
GREAT! JUST GREAT! NOW NOTHING CAN DIE!

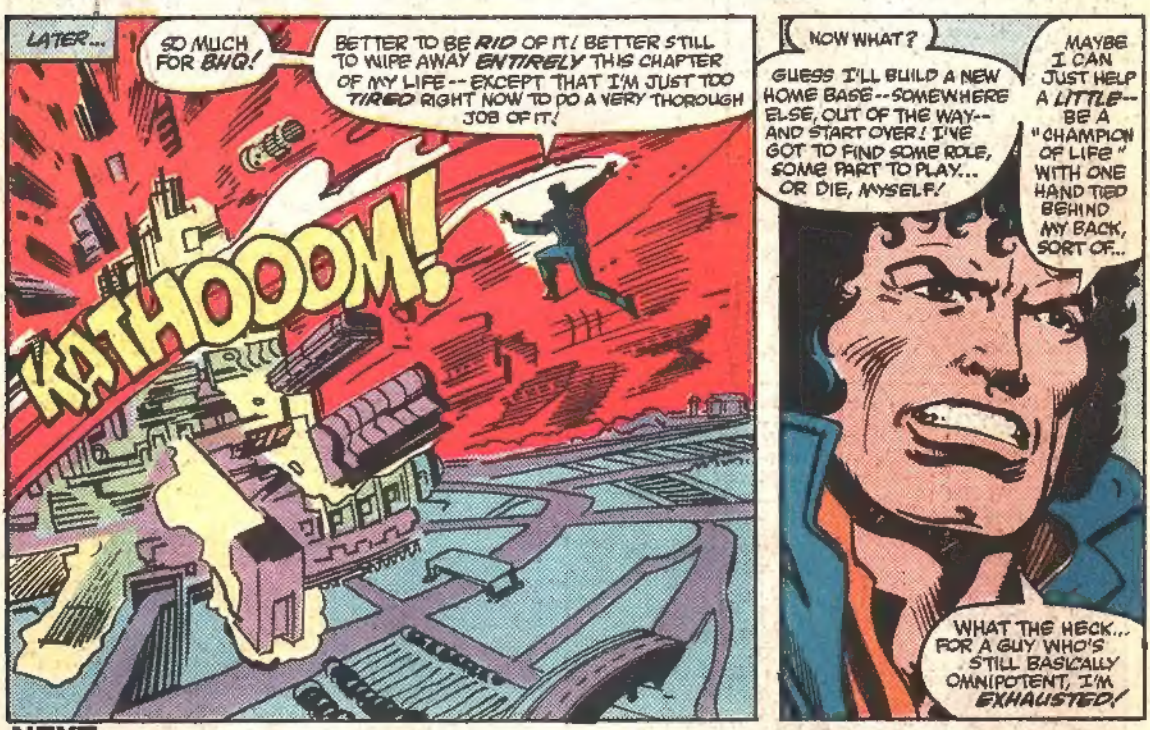
LOOK! WITH ALL MY POWER I CAN'T EVEN KILL THIS ROSE!
WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT?
OH, NOTHING-- EXCEPT WHY SHOULD I BOTHER WATERING THE FLOWERS IN THE GARDEN ANYMORE? WHY SHOULD I EVEN BOTHER TO EAT? HAH! WHAT IS THERE TO EAT? ROCKS?!
WHY BOTHER WITH ANYTHING?

IT'S OVER! THERE'S NOTHING LEFT TO DO! YOU, AN OUTSIDER, BROUGHT US TO OUR DESTINY-- AND WE'RE STUCK WITH IT! DEATH IS GONE, AND ALL THE POWERS OF THE MULTIVERSE TOGETHER CAN'T KILL SOMETHING TO GET IT STARTED AGAIN! NICE WORK...

B-BUT...
GOOD-BYE!
OH, GEE GOSH...

BEYONDER--! I WAS CRAZY! I DIDN'T REALIZE--!
Y-YOU'VE GOT TO FIX IT! BRING DEATH BACK! PLEASE!
DAVE, I CAN'T! THE ONLY WAY TO DO THAT-- WELL, IT WOULD MEAN KILLING SOMETHING--! AND THAT'S BEYOND EVEN MY POWER NOW!
I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT! YOU STILL HAVE MORE POWER THAN ALL OF THE MIGHTY COMBINED! THERE MUST BE A WAY--!

I--I SUPPOSE I COULD TRY! MAYBE IF SOMEONE... SOME SENTIENT CREATURE WERE WILLING...
WILLING... TO DIE?
WORSE... TO BECOME DEATH, IN A MANNER OF SPEAKING... FOR FROM THE SEED OF THE FIRST DEATH, IT'S GRIM SPECTRE WOULD RISE AGAIN!
I ALWAYS WANTED... TO BE SOMEBODY...


LATER...
SO MUCH FOR BHQ!
BETTER TO BE RID OF IT! BETTER STILL TO WIPE AWAY ENTIRELY THIS CHAPTER OF MY LIFE -- EXCEPT THAT I'M JUST TOO TIRED RIGHT NOW TO DO A VERY THOROUGH JOB OF IT!
KATHOOOM!
NOW WHAT?
GUESS I'LL BUILD A NEW HOME BASE--SOMEWHERE ELSE, OUT OF THE WAY--AND START OVER! I'VE GOT TO FIND SOME ROLE, SOME PART TO PLAY... OR DIE, MYSELF!
MAYBE I CAN JUST HELP A LITTLE--BE A "CHAMPION OF LIFE" WITH ONE HAND TIED BEHIND MY BACK, SORT OF...
WHAT THE HECK... FOR A GUY WHO'S STILL BASICALLY OMNIPOTENT, I'M EXHAUSTED!

NEXT: The story continues in *Cloak and Dagger* #4, as the Beyonder shows them the true meaning of vigilantism, and forever changes their lives! A landmark issue!

And in *Power Pack* #18, the Power kids meet the Beyonder again and have the slugfest of their young lives against the creature called *Kurse!* This tale also ties in with *Thor* #363—more on that in a minute.

In *Micronauts* #16, the Beyonder goes to the Microverse on a mission that may *kill billions! Scion* thinks it's a great idea! The Micronauts disagree . . . and how!

Thor #363 guest-stars *Power Pack* and the Beyonder in the final showdown with *Kurse!* This may be the fight of the year!

And, in *Power Man and Iron Fist* #121, Luke Cage takes the Beyonder to lunch at a soul food restaurant. Yes, there's awesome action too, but this culinary experience must be seen to be believed!

One month from now, the threads of our tale are gathered again in *Secret Wars II* #7, which features the *Thing* and virtually every *villain* who's worth his salt! Oh, and the *X-Men*, the *New Mutants* and *Spider-Man* show up, too! Be here for . . .

CHARGE OF THE DARK BRIGADE!